

**Rhode Island Department of Health
Women's Health Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes – May 7, 2008**

Members Present: Katie Albert, ,Melanie Duhamel, Yvonne Freeman, Marie Ghazal, Margaret Koch, Jessica Marfeo, Cynthia Rosengard, Lisa Shea, Iris Tong **Members Excused Absent:** Janae Ashley, Catherine Graziano, Danielle Denis, Kristina Diamond, Wendy Fox, Lisa Jones, Marlene McCarthy, Marian Mehegan, Christine Ryan, Janet Searles **Members Unexcused Absent:** Chasity Hernandez, Janet Searles **HEALTH Staff Present:** Carrie Bridges, Kate McCarthy-Barnett

Welcome & Introductions

Iris Tong called the meeting to order at 3:05 pm.

Approval of Minutes (April 6, 2008)

Marie Ghazal led the WHAC in review of the minutes. Minutes were accepted with minor changes to the list of members present.

Project Updates

Response to Pharmacy Letter: Catherine Cordy was contacted again via e-mail and phone to provide a written response reflecting the verbal message highlighting the Pharmacy Board response to the WHAC letter. The official written response is still pending. **Action Items:** Kate will follow-up with Catherine Cordy.

Letter to Dr. Gifford: Carrie sent the letter to Dr. Gifford but his response is still pending.

Action Items: Kate will follow-up with Dr. Gifford on the status of his response.

New Projects: Iris proposed the implementation of subcommittees to focus on the following for each of the key project topics over the summer months when the WHAC is not meeting:

- Charged with the identifying the role of the WHAC for each topic
- Identifying an action plan to address each topic
- Plan to present to the WHAC at the September meeting

Members who were present at the meeting volunteered for the subcommittees:

- **Perry-Sullivan Bill Subcommittee:** Catherine, Missy, Christine
- **Breast Cancer among Elderly Women Subcommittee:** Marlene, Katie
- **Healthy Relationships among Teenage Girls:** Cynthia, Yvonne, Jessica, Marie
- **Sexual Abuse Awareness Subcommittee:** Danielle, Kristina, Lisa, Melanie, Iris

Members who were not present will have an opportunity to join a subcommittee at the June meeting. If subcommittees would like to meet over the summer, Kate will arrange for space and/or conference call capabilities.

Perry Sullivan Update: A detailed discussion was held on the

proposed letter to Dr. Gifford regarding the Perry Sullivan bill.

Recommendations included the following:

- Remove references to Representative Naghton in the 1st paragraph**
- Remove references to the Governor in 2nd paragraph**
- Provide data/resources to support the overview**
- Remove 4th paragraph**
- Update the conclusion with a specific request/action.**

Next steps: Missy will review requested changes with Catherine and an updated letter will be prepared to be submitted following final approval at the June meeting.

Teen Ambassador Projects

Marie Ghazal led review and finalization of teen ambassador projects.

• Katie Albert: Environment and its impact on breast cancer (Mentor- Marlene McCarthy). Katie provided an update on her project: “Environmental Risks and Breast Cancer” to be presented by Erin Boles, Associate Executive Director of the Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition. The anticipated date is Tuesday, May 27th at 6:30pm at Prout. Next Steps: Katie will send a verification of the date and a copy of a flyer to be printed.

o Melanie Duhamel: Mixed martial arts and basic self-defense class for WHAC and LaSalle (Mentor- Danielle Denis). Melanie will be hosting a self defense class for students at LaSalle on May 15th at 10:30am. Next steps: Melanie will send any materials to be copied.

o Jessica Marfeo: Fundraiser to raise awareness of the need to

educate teen girls on the importance of STD and pregnancy prevention (Mentor- Yvonne Freeman). It's All About Me: Girl's Night Out will be held on May 8th at Women & Infants Hospital Auditorium A at 6:30pm. Proceeds will go to S-Star Birth in Cranston. Jessica has made baskets with donated items for 13 women, babies and toddlers and several announcements were placed in local newspapers.

Action Items: The teen ambassadors will provide a brief presentation at the June meeting (10 minutes) summarizing their topics and event including background information about the topic; a summary of the research performed; and a synopsis of the event. In addition, the teen ambassadors were asked to write a brief written report.

Regional Report: See attached regional report.

Staff Report: Carrie provided an update on the Women's Health Action Plan (see attached Action Plan). The following priorities including the noted objectives and relevant action steps are currently being addressed/in progress:

Priority 1: The Office of Women's Health will identify resources and demonstrate leadership in implementing an Action Plan for Women's Health.

- The Department of Health will develop an integrated approach to the use of existing resources.
- The Department of Health will provide training, TA, and

informational resources to increase staff knowledge and understanding of sex/gender based research and analysis in women's health, promote a whole body/mind approach and integrate women's health programs across categorical funding sources.

- The Department of Health will provide leadership within Rhode Island, regionally and nationally on a gender informed approach to women's health.**

Priority 3: All Department of Health data will be collected, analyzed and reported internally and externally by sex, age, race and ethnicity.

- Define DOH policies and develop a universal standard on the collection, analysis, and reporting of data by sex/gender**
- All Health Department programs will identify and track health disparities by gender as identified through data**

Priority 4: The Department of Health will establish a policy that ensures all programs operate with sex/gender analysis to improve health outcomes for women.

- Department of Health performance measures will reflect women's different or additional risk factors, symptoms, disease manifestations and treatment effectiveness.**
- All Department of Health RFP's and contracts will require sex/gender analysis and targeted gender informed programming.**

Priority 5: The Department of Health will establish policies and procedures, which ensure the integration of underserved communities of women in all planning, monitoring and evaluation of health activities.

- Plan for and respond to needs of women for emergency**

preparedness & response

- **Define DOH policies and develop a universal standard on the collection, analysis, and reporting of data by sex/gender**

Priority 6: The Department of Health will establish policies and procedures to ensure access to health care and wellness for underserved communities of women.

- **Ensure providers have knowledge about and implement the CLAS**** Standards, alternate formats (e.g., audio/large print), and language access**
- **Enhance consumer information about their service options, rights and responsibilities, and language access**
- **Enhance providers' knowledge of DOH programs, available support services, and their rights and responsibilities**
- **Improve access to health care services for women after incarceration**

Next Steps: Carrie will continue to provide regular updates on the status of the action plan objectives. Members requested that future updates be provided in writing to be sure all action items are reviewed.

Announcements

Small grants are available to assist with Women's Health Events

Reminder to attend the Teen Ambassador Events

Next Meeting is June 4, 2008.